

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claims 1-20 and new claims 23-24 are presented herewith for examination. Claims 1-4 and 7-18 are currently amended. Claims 5-6 and 19-20 are as originally presented. Claims 21-22 were previously withdrawn. Support for new claims 23-24 is provided by original claims 1-2. Support for the reference to unison "group" in the amended and new claims is provided on page 7, line 24 through page 8, line 3. Support for the phrase "at a consistent rate as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling" is provided on page 5, lines 20-25 and on page 6, line 30 through page 7, line 3.

Applicant affirms that no new matter has been added to the patent application. Applicant thanks the Examiner for granting a telephone interview on May 25, 2006, and hereby requests careful reconsideration of this application in view of the following comments.

RESPONSE TO 35 U.S.C. § 112 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-20

The Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

As set forth hereinabove, Applicant has revised the phrase "strings of at least one string unison of said instrument" for clarity. This phrase now recites "strings of at least one unison group of said instrument." Therefore, withdrawal of the § 112 rejection is respectfully requested.

RESPONSE TO 35 U.S.C. § 103 REJECTIONS

Claims 1-20

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kovach (US 4,452,122), in view of Gilmore (US 5,756,913), and further in view of Ignatius (US 5,585,579). **Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the § 103 rejections as the claims have been rewritten to clarify that the invention pertains to a device for increasing tuning longevity that comprises:**

A coupling positioned between or around two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate ~~in unison~~ at a consistent rate as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling.

Kovach, Gilmore and Ignatius, singularly and in combination, fail to disclose, teach, or otherwise suggest the use of a coupling that enables unison strings to oscillate together in unison (that is, at a consistent rate). The features of Applicant's invention are nonobvious and hence patentable under § 103 since claims 1-20 recite novel physical subject matter that explicitly distinguishes Applicant's invention from Kovach, Gilmore and Ignatius.

In particular, these patents cannot render Applicant's invention obvious, as they recite a key functional limitation, namely, the disjointed and independent tuning of each string of a unison. It would not have been obvious to modify the patented devices in accordance with Applicant's unitary coupling design, which requires **synchronized tuning of two or more strings of a unison group by means of force transfer effected by the mechanical connection of the coupling**, as defined in the revised and amended claims. Doing so would be entirely counter to the stated intentions and design requirements of Kovach, Gilmore and Ignatius to achieve independent and disengaged tuning of each string of a unison. For all of these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this § 103 rejection.

NEW CLAIMS 23-24

Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 23-24, which recite a new principle of operation that is not disclosed, taught or suggested by Kovach, Gilmore or Ignatius, singularly or in combination. Newly presented claims 23-24 pertain to:

A **piano** containing a device for increasing tuning longevity comprising:
a coupling positioned between or around two or more strings of at least one unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of the coupling.

The preceding key limitations distinguish Applicant's invention from the patented references. Allowance of the subject matter of claims 23-24 is therefore requested of the Examiner.

CONCLUSION

Applicant's invention reveals a new and unexpected principle of operation that is not taught, disclosed or in any way suggested by Kovach, Gilmore and Ignatius, or any combination thereof. The novel features of Applicant's invention which effect this new principle of operation are clearly recited in Applicant's pending claims 1-20 and new claims 23-24. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 1-20 and 23-24 define patentably over the prior art and should be indicated allowed.

Applicant believes that all of the present claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry and careful consideration of this Response and an early indication of allowance is hereby requested. If the Examiner believes there is any issue which could be

resolved by a telephone conference or a personal interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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